

TALON



Operation Joint Forge
Saturday, June 9, 2001

Task Force Eagle
www.tfeagle.army.mil

Signal Capabilities Day

Radio MIR Brings Stars and Peace

McGovern Hoopsters Take on Brcko

A Mighty Warrior!

Are you a mighty warrior? Do you desire to be? What is your definition of one? More importantly, what is God's definition? Would your definition and God's definition match up? Let's find out.

In Judges 6, we read of a man named Gideon. He was your typical guy. There wasn't anything very special about him, at least on the surface. He was one of many Israelites being beat up by another group of people known as the Midianites. One day, Gideon happened to be threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the bad guys, when out of nowhere, the angel of the Lord appeared and said directly to him, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!"

Since when does threshing wheat in a winepress make an individual a mighty warrior? Could it be that God's definition is different than ours? More than likely, this is the case.

God is not concerned with how many hoohah badges we wear, or how many degrees we have earned. He is not concerned with us having the physical strength of Samson or the ability to run back-to-back marathons. God defines a mighty warrior as the person who chooses to do battle on their knees (a prayer warrior). Whether we are large or small means nothing, spiritually speaking. God looks at our heart!

The first thing Gideon did after the angel titled him a "mighty warrior" was pray. His response to what the angel told him was prayer (Judges 6:13). He talked to the Father. Do we do this? A warrior is also an individual who is willing to obey God, no matter what the circumstances. Gideon was told to go fight the Midianites. He knew he was outnumbered, and even questioned the Lord about it (Judges 6:15). However, his obedience to the Lord took priority over his doubts.

Do our doubts override our obedience? A mighty warrior is someone who is willing to challenge that which is not of God (Judges 6:25-32). Gideon found ten men and proceeded to conduct covert operations to destroy his earthly father's idols that were not of God; when was the last time we stood firm and challenged what wasn't right in the eyes of God?

The Lord is still in the business of recruiting mighty warriors. We need desperately to understand what God's concept of being trained and combat-ready really means. The angel of the Lord saw fit to acknowledge Gideon as a mighty warrior! Would he see fit to bestow the same title on you?

THOUGHTS FOR THE DAY

Saturday: "It is surprising what a man can do when he has to, and how little most men will do when they don't have to." (Walter Linn)

Sunday: "Good timber does not grow with ease; the stronger the wind, the stronger the trees." (J. Willard Marriott)

Monday: "For each time you smile you will find it is true somebody, somewhere will smile back at you" (Helen Steiner Rice)

Tuesday: "Far and away the best prize that life has to offer is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." (Theodore Roosevelt)

Wednesday: "Life's inevitable changes are like a compulsory roller-coaster ride. You can cower and shut your eyes tight, or you can exult in the thrills." (Roger Crawford)

Thursday: "Anger is a very appropriate and necessary response to an injustice. But stand back now; the truth, clearly spoken, is always your best weapon. Calmly spoken, it can burn a hole through the hardest heart." (Bill Chickering, Healing an Angry Heart)

Friday: "Formal education will earn you a living. Self-education makes you a fortune." (Anonymous)

Chaplain (Capt.) Keith N. Croom
Eagle Base

TALON

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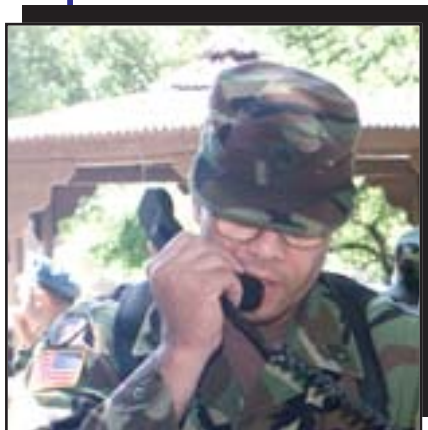
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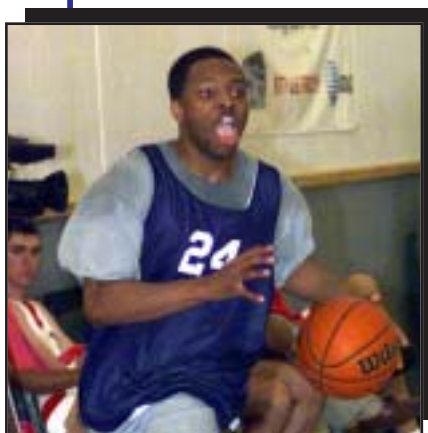
Soldiers of four nations shared the gift of gab at Signal Capabilities Day. (Photo by Spc. Patrick Tharpe)



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Nina Badric rocks Tuzla with her message of peace, love and understanding. (Photo by Spc. Lewis Hilburn)



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A young Team McGovern holds off semi-pro Brcko, 68-63. (Photo by Pfc. Daniel Lucas)

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Lighter, Faster, and More Lethal -

Army Transformation and You

Commentary by David Kuhns, Sr.
Fort Lewis, Wash., Public Affairs Office

The planned roll-out of a couple of early editions of the Army's new Interim Armored Vehicle will certainly be touted as a key event in the course of Army Transformation. It is just as certain to draw waves of criticism making unfavorable comparisons between an IAV and an M1 Tank.

Sadly, much of that criticism will come from soldiers – and they ought to know better.



Gen. Shinseki

No matter how much effort has been put into explaining Chief of Staff Gen. Eric K. Shinseki's vision of the Army of the future, too many otherwise intelligent soldiers just refuse to "get it."

They seem far more devoted to hanging on to their fears and professional prejudices than in understanding the most far-reaching innovations in the Army since the advent of the helicopter.

The IAV is only one piece of equipment to be used by the Interim Force – "A ride to the fight" as the "Joes" in 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division at Fort Lewis describe it – but the way critics misrepresent its role shows a broader misunderstanding of the entire Transformation concept.

In balancing the capabilities of an IAV and an Abrams tank, critics make the wrong comparisons.

If they want to get it right, those pundits should compare the IAV's 60-mph speed to the speed of a squad's worth of combat boots, since the new vehicle will allow infantrymen an unprecedented combination of strategic and tactical mobility.

They could compare the IAV to an overstuffed rucksack, because the infantrymen training at Fort Lewis with the LAV III love the fact that most missions require them to carry only an assault pack – and that lets them haul a greatly increased basic load of ammunition.

No matter what you may see on an Internet chat room or hear in the company dayroom, Army Transformation is all about positives.

Critics would do better to compare a Mobile Gun System IAV's 105 mm gun to a soldier armed with an AT-4, because every company commander in the IAV-equipped infantry units will have three mobile gun systems to provide bunker-busting, wall-smashing firepower that no infantry company now has.

The comparisons could go on and on. What it comes down to is that the new units being equipped with the IAV ought to be compared to a brigade from the 10th Mountain Division, not 1st Cavalry Division.

The soldiers of Transformation at Fort

Lewis are benefiting from vastly improved speed, fire support, and the latest digital, gee-whiz electronics, without losing any of their light-fighter, get-in-close-enough-to-smell-'em-then-shove-it-down-their-throats swagger.

No matter what you may see on an Internet chat room or hear in the company dayroom, Transformation is all about positives. The Army is giving up ... nothing.

That Abrams Tank – "70 tons of steel and sex appeal," as a tanker described it in a recent news article – is not being turned in and replaced with a lightly armed death trap.

In the same article, a 1st Battalion, 33rd Armor soldier – from Fort Lewis, of all places – complained, "I don't see any need to desecrate the armor corps just to give the infantry more firepower. Why don't they give the infantry those new vehicles?"

Hello! That's what is happening. Armor and armored cavalry units are keeping their tanks and will be the Army's ultimate war winners for years to come.

They are part of the Legacy Force that will carry us through until American industry and research and development laboratories make the Future Combat System a reality and we arrive at the Objective Force.

Legacy Force, Interim Force, Objective Force – that's a lot of "forces" to keep straight. What it all comes down to is we aren't giving anything away until something a whole lot better comes along.

Just remember, that IBCT isn't a wimpy mech force, it's a light unit with legs, eyes, and muscle – and with its entire infantry attitude intact.



The Army's new Light Armored Vehicle III variant, shown here on display at the Pentagon, is equipped with a 105 mm gun.
(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kathleen Rhem)

Training Support Center Opens

Story by Pfc. Daniel Lucas
Camp McGovern

A new Training Support Center opened at Camp McGovern June 1. The TSC includes several options for soldiers requesting hands-on and classroom training.

"Our main goal is putting training support where the soldiers are," said Boniface Mutia, manager of the TSC. "There is going to be a Distance Learning Center, a place where soldiers can attend military schools through satellite communication with Germany."

There is also an Indirect Fire Trainer, a three-dimensional simulation where soldiers can practice fire missions. The IFT will be operational within a few months. It addresses multiple scenarios, everything from mountain and night-fire scenarios to actual qualification courses.

The Distance Learning Center is not yet ready for soldiers to use.

"To get the Distance Learning Center up and running, we need a satellite dish, two televisions and cameras, an ELMO (a camera that allows the teacher to focus on the class and projects the image the students), and 20 laptop computers (one for every student)," said Mr. Mutia. He estimated that the DLC would be ready in several months.

The abilities of the Virtual Arms Training Simulator are very diverse. The system runs actual video to three-dimensional scenarios to be played out by the soldiers. "There are over 120 scenarios in the VAST and we hope there will be more soon," said Mr. Mutia. "You can also create or film your own three-dimensional scenarios and we can download them into our system." He also said that in each of the scenarios, the manager has total

control.

The system has a variety of real-time abilities, such as changing wind direction and speeds. There are options that allow the manager to change where the weapon sights are targeted and make the weapon malfunction, Mutia added.

"I can even jam a weapon, once or as many times as I want," he said.

"The VAST monitors where soldiers are aiming during the entire exercise," said Sgt. 1st Class Rodney Lawrence, platoon sergeant for 2nd Platoon, 223rd Military Police Company. "We can tell if they are having the wrong sight picture or jerking the trigger when they fire. We can even tell if the soldier who is firing is nervous."

In combination with the VAST is the Multi-Arcade Combat System. "Basically, it is a Super Nintendo hooked up to a laser-training M16," said Mr. Mutia. "However, you can only run a really small range on it, so I doubt it will be getting a lot of use."

There are also two indirect fire simulators as well, the Indirect Fire Trainer and the Guard Unit Armory Device Full Crew Interactive Simulation Trainer.

The IFT uses large, three-dimensional computer-generated images on a screen and allows soldiers to call for indirect fire right on the screen. The GUARDFIST uses two computers. "At the first computer is a student, who has information and details on his computer screen. He then plots where and what type of indirect fire he wants," said Mr. Mutia.

"On the other computer is the teacher, who watches everything that the student does." These systems have the capability to play out any series of scenarios in the computer. It also allows the soldiers to practice firing and familiarization with an array of weapons: M16A2 rifle, M9 pistol, M203 grenade launcher, M249 squad

automatic weapon, and even an AT-4 antitank rocket.

"The capabilities of these systems are phenomenal; to show you everything that it can do would take hours," said Rufus Allen, Training Support Center manager for Bosnia.

"This type of training is a lot more realistic (than the older electronic equipment)," said Command Sgt. Maj. Horris Frazier, Camp McGovern's command sergeant major.

"The system allows soldiers get assistance with their breathing and aiming on an individual level," he said.

Command Sgt. Maj. Frazier said the center would allow soldiers to come in as a squad-size element, enabling them to receive more individualized attention and facilitate the scheduling process. To schedule a session on any of the TSC systems, a soldier needs to ask his platoon sergeant to schedule a time through the S-3 section. This system requires no ammunition, only the time spent in the center and compressed air for the weapons.

"Time is a lot cheaper than the ammunition is," said Sgt. 1st Class Lawrence. "The reserve components have to plan for ammunition and may only get a chance to go to the range once a year. With this system, the soldiers could get to practice up to three or more times a year, depending on how busy it is, to get used to firing and increase their chances of qualifying."

"The center is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week," said Mr. Allen. "We want to put (facilities) in that keep the soldiers' combat edge. The soldiers were brought here in peacetime for a peace mission and they have to keep their edge. That is what all of these systems are going to allow them to do."



Computer-generated helicopters whirl around in a three-dimensional environment at Camp McGovern's new Training Support Center. The TSC allows soldiers to practice a wide range of weapons training, from pistol and rifle marksmanship to field artillery and tactical air strikes.

Signal Capabilities Day Commu



Turkish soldiers join with other signalers to conduct interoperability tests. Radios from different armies were set on the same frequency, and troops tried to communicate with each other.

This American satellite antenna was one of the many pieces of communications gear on display during Signal Capabilities Day.



Story by Spc. T.S. Jarmusz
Photos by
Spc. Patrick Tharpe
Eagle Base

Soldiers from more than 12 units and four countries participated in Signal Capabilities Day at Eagle Base on June 2.

Signal Capabilities Day enabled soldiers to present their equipment and ideas to other signal units on a multinational level.

There were exhibits and demonstrations, awards and a luncheon, said 1st Lt. Chris Scherbert, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), the Multinational Division (North) G-6 plans officer.

1st Lt. Scherbert, the event's organizer, said this was the first event of its type held

during Stabilization Force 9. "It was better than I expected. I didn't expect such big set up with static displays, equipment and vehicles," said Sgt. Niels Sall, Armored Personnel Commander, Headquarters Company, Nordic-Polish Battle Group. Signal Day featured a display of military communications equipment from around the world, including systems from the U.S., Nordic-Polish Battle Group, Turkish Battalion Task Force, and the 1st Peacekeeping Russian Separate Airborne Brigade, said Maj. Sam Hammond, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized), the deputy G-6.

Units demonstrated how their equipment worked, and then conducted interoperability tests with each other. According to Maj. Hammond, interoperability tests are when radios from two or more countries are set to the same frequency, and the operators attempt to communicate. "We have to work together on daily basis, so it's a good idea to test our capabilities," said Maj. Hammond. "We are all here for the same mission."

The radios worked just fine, 1st Lt. Scherbert said.

"They performed exactly how we thought they would," he said.

Interoperability tests were conducted with high, very high, and ultra high frequency radios and satellites, Maj. Hammond said. During the radio demonstrations, soldiers took the opportunity to learn about the other countries' communications systems. "You really get to see just how much they know and what they're capable of doing. This is a multinational mission, and today's events further support that," 1st Lt. Scherbert said. Sgt. Sall, of the NORDPOL Battle Group, said he was impressed with the knowledge of his fellow signalers.

"All the soldiers could answer any of the question I had. Everyone showed a great deal of professionalism," he said. The other countries' commo gear wasn't the only attraction, the soldiers said. The get-together gave them a chance to meet their colleagues from other armies.

"It was a great opportunity for our noncommissioned officers to show the other nations what an excellent job our soldiers are doing," said 1st Lt. Scherbert.

One of the American signal troops agreed. "I think the soldiers...are doing an outstanding job at completing all their missions," said Pfc. Zachary Hurley, a network switching systems operator and maintainer with the 123rd Signal Battalion. "I have never worked with foreign soldiers before. I thought it was a good experience to share our knowledge and talk about what we do."

Communicates a Language of its Own

Event organizers said that being able to meet with their counterparts was one of the day's highlights. Working with soldiers from another nation is a rare opportunity.

"It is a valuable learning experience for everyone, because we all do joint patrols," said Maj. Hammond. "The U.S. signal soldiers do not have many opportunities to intermingle with soldiers from other nations, and this is a good chance for everyone to get together."

"They understand communications, and so do we. Understanding your equipment and its capabilities – that's a language in itself," said 1st Lt. Scherbert.

Despite differences in language and culture, soldiers taking part in Signal Capabilities Day found they had a number of things in common.

"We all have similar equipment designed to do the same things," said Maj. Hammond. "We are all trained signal soldiers."

Lunch followed the interoperability tests and demonstrations; troops from different countries sat together and talked as soldiers do – about their armies, equipment, and homes.

"It's always a great experience getting to know more about people from other countries," said Sgt. Sall.

"I enjoyed the chance to sit down and talk with them over a meal. It was a good way to combine business with pleasure. When you come to this base, you feel welcome everywhere you go."

Another NORDPOL soldier agreed.

"It's good to get off your base and do something different than what you're normally doing, and to get to meet people from other countries," said Capt. Jim Hegmer, a forward air controller with Headquarters Company.

"It's a beautiful day, everyone was here having a good time," said Maj. Hammond.

"What more could you ask for?"



Russian soldiers were among the troops taking part in Signal Capabilities Day. Here, Capt. Sergey Kurpachev (left) and 1st Lt. Alexander Matyukhin of 1st PRSAB check connections on a cordless switchboard.



Turkish Capt. Kemal Aksoy explains the capabilities of a handheld radio to Brig. Gen. Robley Rigdon, assistant commander of MND(N).

Give Peace a Dance

Stories by Air Force Maj. Richard C. Sater

Photos by Spc. Lewis Hilburn

Eagle Base

The Stabilization Force operates Radio MIR, a network that broadcasts to the Bosnian population from affiliate stations in Brcko, Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, through the Psychological Operations Support Element headquartered in Sarajevo. Troops assigned to the 10th PSYOP Detachment



Croatian singer Nina Badric helps spread the message of peace at her June 1 concert in Tuzla.

conduct operations here at Eagle Base and oversee the affiliate station in Brcko. They handled much of the coordination – and the military presence – for a concert by Nina Badric and Dino Dvornik held June 1 in Tuzla. MIR stands for “music and information radio,” but, even more to the point, “*mir*” is the Serbo-Croatian word for “peace.” The mission of Radio MIR is to communicate the importance of ethnic tolerance and understanding to the local citizens and to provide an even-handed source of local and international news. The station also broadcasts public service announcements about freedom of

movement, land mine awareness, weapons turn-in, and other concerns. For its disc jockeys, the station affiliates employ local

talent, men and women who can speak to the listeners in their own language.

The Tuzla concert was one of four being sponsored by SFOR to promote Radio MIR and the good word. Previous shows took place in the cities of Gorazde and Novi Tranik, and the fourth will be in Sarajevo later this month.

The shows may serve as a prototype for a series of community concerts around the country, part of a promotional campaign called “Summer of MIR,” according to Staff Sgt. Ted Vytlačil, the non-commissioned officer in charge of Radio MIR-Brcko. “They’re designed to demonstrate the continuing commitment of SFOR to local and national communities,” he said. Radio MIR offers tickets, T-shirts, and compact discs as promotions for the concerts and airs exclusive artist interviews, as well as “live” music recorded during the shows. Popular singers like Badric and Dvornik encourage music fans to tune in; the artists in turn help spread the message of tolerance. Badric, interviewed by Radio MIR before the concert, commented on that subject. Ethnic prejudice, she said, is “a bad heritage we have received from elders. All of that must be left behind. We must accept (the past) and hope for the future. Something nicer is waiting for us.” It might start with a song. Music has no borders; “Every good song will find its way into everybody’s heart,” she said. “Music is universal, as well as love. Once your heart tells you, ‘Fall in love with him,’ you are not able to choose his religion or his skin color.” Music and love see no color, no ethnic division. What better way to bring a crowd together? It sends a message that needs no translation.

After last Friday’s concert, maybe some of the 4,000 concert-goers carried that message home.

Musicians Carry More than a Tune

Energy, excitement and a message that needs no translation.

Everybody everybody shake it baby shake it baby move baby move baby make you wanna dance baby dance baby can’t you feel the beat baby beat in your heart.

Say what you will. Dance-pop is the universal language, spun-sugar tunes and thunder-drum-and-bass and smoke and mirrors under a carousel of lights, the singer singing excitement and never-ending tonight while the boys and girls glide and sway to the hypnotism.

Nina Badric understands. Currently one of the most popular Croatian singers, Nina Badric shows why from the moment she steps onstage into the light. You want proof? It was there June 1 at the Mejdan Center concert hall in Tuzla.

Her girl-next-door ponytail is offset by skin-tight, studded black denim, a sparkling purple halter-top, and stiletto heels. She looks the part and has a voice to match – clear and true, its bright sheen dusted with fine grit. She wraps her pop-rock in a little blues and soul and delivers the goods, song after song. Each one belongs to her, undeniably; she *is* the woman in love, the woman hurt, the woman angry, the survivor.

The set list spotlights her current album, simply titled *Nina*, and the song titles tell the whole story: “*Slobodna*” (“Free

Woman”), “*Vjecita Ljubav*” (“Eternal Love”), “*Nek Ti Bude Kao Meni*” (“Hope You Feel Like I Do”), “*Sva Tebi Pripadam*” (“I Belong Completely to You”). She mixes in a handful of covers in English that send the same memo: the Pointer Sisters’ “I’m So Excited,” Gloria Gaynor’s “I Will Survive,” James Brown’s “I Got You (I Feel Good).” She does – and we do, too. She clearly enjoys performing, reaching out to the crowd, and the boys and girls reach back, singing along and soaring with her. The program ranges from mid- to up-tempo, and Nina’s smart and supple five-man band of the usual suspects gives her the right context every time, from ‘jazz lite’ to disco machine and funk express. An adventurous keyboard player and saxophonist add color and spark, and the hard-working drummer nails it down, but Nina rules the night, remaining onstage for nearly two hours without a break. And don’t forget Croatian singer Dino Dvornik, who

opens the show, priming the pump with a brief, energetic set. He makes the most of his 20 minutes. Never still, he defines the “hi-NRG” required of the genre. His songs are built from the kind of itchy, nagging hooks that sink in the first time you hear them. Even if you can’t tell what he’s singing about, his songs work the crowd into a pleasurable spin. Say what you will. It’s the universal language.



A dance number kicks off last week’s concert by Dino Dvornik and Nina Badric.

Small Group with a Big Job

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hudson
Eagle Base

Flags of eight nations fly at the edge of a parade ground. Soldiers from these nations walk to and fro across the small camp near Dobo, in northern Bosnia. Their uniforms and languages represent Scandinavian and Baltic countries – even a few Americans are scattered among them.

The Nordic-Polish Battle Group is very much a part of Multinational Division (North), the sector controlled by U.S. forces, but as part of the battle group, the Americans there are a small minority.

Ask any of them and they'll say they wouldn't trade places with anybody else in Bosnia, especially the folks in Tuzla. Despite isolation from their units, living on a camp where seven other languages are spoken, and eating a diet rich in the European staples of bread, cheese and preserved meats, the 41 U.S. soldiers and one airman consider their assignment a rare opportunity to experience life among people of diverse cultures. Staff Sgt. David Howe, a military policeman with the Kentucky Army National Guard, is a liaison between Stabilization Force and the International Police Task Force. "I'll spend 99 percent of my life around Americans," said Staff Sgt. Howe. "This is a chance to work around different people."

Senior Airman Duilia Mora, from Queens, N.Y., works as the weather forecaster for the Nordic-Polish Battle Group and is the only U.S. Air Force person on the base. She is assigned to the 401st Expeditionary Weather Squadron, the bulk of whose members are at Camp Comanche. "A few of us were sent out to base camps where we're needed," said Senior Airman Mora. "I volunteered to be one of those to leave the group."

Senior Airman Mora is no stranger to the international environment. The daughter of Colombian immigrants, she spent a number of her growing-up years in Brazil. She speaks English, Spanish and Portuguese.

"The Army people have made me feel very much at home... they include me in their activities," she said. Off-duty activities include volleyball games, and barbecues on their makeshift patio deck.

"Every morning, I brief 50 to 70 officers from different nations on the weather conditions in our area and in their own hometowns," said Senior Airman Mora. "It's nice here. There's a sense that we're all in this together, we're far from the other base camps and we all work together to keep each others' morale up," she said.

Spc. Bridget Sloan of Company A, 103rd

Military Intelligence Battalion, Fort Stewart, Ga., is on her second six-month rotation at the battle group. A linguist, she works in the human intelligence or civil affairs fields, like most of the Americans stationed at NORDPOL. Spc. Sloan said she puts anywhere between 500 and 1,500 miles on her up-armored HMMWV every month, covering the largest area of responsibility in MND(N).

Sgt. 1st Class Gary Frasse, an Army Reservist with Company A, 323rd Military Intelligence Battalion, Fort Meade, Md., is an intelligence team leader. Sgt. 1st Class Frasse said that besides having the largest area to cover, theirs is also the most touchy, as his team must cross boundary lines between all three of the formerly warring factions and deal with citizens of those three groups.

"We sometimes go on patrols with soldiers from other nations, but on a day-to-day basis, we don't have much interaction with them," he said.

Spc. Cristy E. Borman, also a linguist with Co. A, 103rd, went on a joint mission with Latvian soldiers. "They drove a little faster than we're used to," she said. Spc. Kimberli D. Eaton, another Co. A linguist, said the Polish soldiers are "very nice – extremely polite and friendly."

Sgt. Michael Boesgaard is an administrative clerk in the Danish army. Most of the Danish positions at NORDPOL are administrative; they run the logistics in the camp.

"We have the same sense of humor as the Americans – we understand the same things – have a lot in common," said Sgt. Boesgaard. "They're glad to be here. For a young person, the experience is very mind-opening. This is the first time in their lives that they stand on their own without parents and family and have to live in close quarters. They have to find a way to get along and help each other out."

Pvt. Lukasz Janus, a 19-year-old Polish paratrooper, volunteered to join his army right out of high school. He has been in the army for six months and in Bosnia for just three weeks. Pvt. Janus' English is halting, but he finds the

words he's searching for after some seconds.

"We are just new members of NATO. We learn many things in our new situation as peacekeepers. I feel good – we feel good but have differences with other (participating member nations). Our history and culture are different. We would like to be more like German army or U.S. Army, but we are eastern European. We share a lot in common with the people here in Bosnia (in terms of) blood and war," he said.

Pvt. Janus is able to communicate with the civilians in his area through interpreters and by making use of the similarities between their two languages.

"(Bosnian) people are tired of this situation. They see uniforms and know that this problem is too long in Bosnia," he said. "They don't like (to see) weapons and uniforms and our vehicles driving through their streets but they recognize our flag and the SFOR flag and accept our mission here."

Joining the military is one of the few options available to a young Polish man, Pvt. Janus said, as unemployment in their country is very high. He's excited that he's earning \$650 per month here. "I wanted to come here – here or Kosovo," he said.



Polish soldiers practice drill and ceremonies at the Nordic-Polish Battle Group camp in northern Bosnia. Seeing other armies' practices and traditions are just a few of the multinational flavors enjoyed by troops stationed in Dobo.



Video teleconference equipment allows soldiers to talk to their loved ones in the States, while seeing them at the same time.



Sgt. 1st Class Roy Marchert, an 8th-grade teacher in civilian life, laughs as he uses video teleconferencing equipment at Camp Comanche to talk to his students in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Video Teleconference Equipment allows Soldier to... Reach Out and Teach Someone

Story and photos by Spc. Grant Calease
Camp Comanche

Being on the other side of the world from one's family and friends can be a trying experience. E-mail and the telephone are wonderful ways to keep in touch with loved ones, but the Morale, Welfare and Recreation folks have another toy to help bridge the gap.

The video teleconference equipment at Camp Comanche allows any soldier to actually see whom they are talking to and can make the distance feel not quite so vast.

Recently, a Stabilization Force soldier, a teacher in civilian life, used the VTC technology to talk to his students back in the States.

Sgt. 1st Class Roy F. Marchert, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry, teaches 8th-grade social studies at Dacula Middle School in Dacula, Ga.

About 115 students were bused to a Gwinnett County school studio in neighboring Lawrenceville to ask their teacher, who was at the Camp Comanche Cyber Café, questions.

"It was fantastic. The kids are just great and my co-workers did so much for me," said Sgt. 1st Class Marchert.

The studio audience in Georgia included Sgt. 1st Class Marchert's wife and two daughters, along with his co-workers, students and several Georgia Army National Guard soldiers.

Maj. Gen. David B. Poythress, Georgia's adjutant general, was on hand to lend his support and add to the questions the students asked Sgt. 1st Class Marchert.

The students asked Sgt. 1st Class Marchert many questions ranging from, "Is the education system in Bosnia different from in the United States?" to, "How do the Bosnian people feel about Americans?"

The students also held up a flag they made for Sgt. 1st Class Marchert before he left. The flag is white with a blue star in the middle and 'SFC Marchert' printed under the star.

The flag has been flying at Dacula Middle School since his

deployment.

"I was floored. The people in the Dacula community are very special. It's the kind of place you want to raise your kids," he said.

"The two ladies that ran the teleconference (Georgia Barnwell, principal, and Judy Stephens, assistant principal at Dacula Middle School) are both daughters of World War II vets, so they have a great deal of respect for the military," Sgt. 1st Class Marchert said.

"These kids think a lot of all the soldiers. The guys here aren't forgotten," he said.

"I've got 115 kids back home who really respect these soldiers," he added.

Since Sgt. 1st Class Marchert's deployment will stretch into the coming school year, he said he would like to try the VTC again.

"I would love to introduce myself to my new students in August. Kind of meet my kids before I get back," he said.

"Not that many soldiers have been using the VTC, but hopefully more will start to," said Spc. Vincent L. Parker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry, Georgia Army National Guard.

Spc. Parker, of Albany, Ga., works in the Camp Comanche communications shop, and maintains the VTC equipment.

"The word needs to get out. It allows soldiers to talk face-to-face with loved ones," said Spc. Parker.

The Cyber Café at Camp Comanche has a sign-in for soldiers who would like to give it a try, he added.

"Soldiers wanting to use it will need to sign up three days in advance. That gives us time to contact the armory back home to set things up," he said.

The soldier planning to use the VTC needs to contact their loved ones and inform them when and where the VTC will take place, said Spc. Parker.

"I think most will people really like it. Even if someone talks to his wife every day by telephone, it's still nice to see their face," Spc. Parker added.

McGovern Beats Brcko with Last-Minute Rally

Story and photos by Pfc. Daniel Lucas
Camp McGovern

Team McGovern managed to hold off a last-minute rally by semi-pro Brcko before posting a 68-63 win in Sunday's game at the McGovern Center.

The game got off to a lopsided start for the McGovern defenders; Brcko scored 10 unanswered points with a series of fast plays that left the Americans in the dust.

McGovern's coach, Staff Sgt. Darryl Kitchens, called a time-out in the first five minutes of the game in an attempt to slow the Brcko offense.

Team McGovern changed strategies to a more spread-out defense that stopped the advance of Brcko in its tracks. The defensive switch and accurate shooting combined to put McGovern ahead 35-30 at the half.

Neither team was prepared to give an

inch when the referee put the ball into play to start the second half.

Team McGovern launched a series of cross-court passes that flew by the opposition. At one point, Spc. Jamil Jackson, a finance specialist with the 3rd Soldier Support Battalion, grabbed a fast pass and dropped it in the basket, on his way to a game-high 24 points.

Spc. Travis Wiley, a mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, led on the boards with 16 rebounds and 10 blocks.

One McGovern soldier said he was glad to just be able to play the game, since it gave him a break from the daily routine.

"It allows us to be something besides soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Ricardo Rivera of Troop B, 3-7 Cavalry.

"It also lets (the Brcko team) see that we are more than soldiers, that we are also people," he said.

"(Team McGovern) wasn't used to playing international rules at the beginning of the game," said Staff Sgt. Kitchens. "The rules are a lot more aggressive than our team was used to."

The last half showed the best of both teams.

The semi-pro locals had their time to shine, as Saniln Vidovic overwhelmed the Army defense and made three-point shots and led numerous well-executed plays.

At one point, Vidovic lobbed the ball high into the air to Eldin Hamidovic, who



REACH! Pvt. Terrance Jenkins, HHT, 3-7 Cavalry, goes for the short jumper as Damir Ravkic tries to reject the shot.

plucked the ball out of the air and stuffed it into the basket.

Some of Brcko's plays were so precise that even the most diligent defense McGovern could offer was quickly overrun. The rapid-fire substitution of McGovern players allowed them time to rest and take another view of how the Brcko team worked.

After a battle royal for control of the ball in the second half, the fast Army team managed to hold off Brcko in the last minute by passing the ball and keeping it well out of reach of the visitors.

Team McGovern's coach said that despite the win, he wasn't completely happy with his team's performance.

"We did win the game," said Staff Sgt. Kitchens, "but I wasn't pleased with the defense and we didn't rebound as much as we should have. We played well in spurts and that was how Brcko was able to keep up."

Brcko's coach, although disappointed with the loss, had good things to say about the American team.

"Anytime we get to play against Team McGovern, it is always a real pleasure," said Jemsudin Ahmedbasic.



JAMMED! A stunned Eldin Hamidovic stands helpless as Pvt. Travis Leary, HHT, 3-7 Cavalry, dunks.

UXO, or No? EOD

Story by Spc. Lewis Hilburn

Knows...

Brown and Root Service Corporation workers cutting tree limbs near Iron Horse Bluffs on May 29 found what they thought might have been a live grenade.

The workers notified Staff Sgt. Richard Smith, of 1st Battalion, 121st Infantry's guard force, a Georgia Army National Guard unit. Staff Sgt. Smith contacted the Base Defense Operations Cell.

"I took charge of the scene until the BDOC S-3 got there," Staff Sgt. Smith said.

BDOC notified the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team and military police. 1st Lt. Janine Albritton, of the 20th Combat Support Hospital from Fort Stewart, Ga., Task Force Medical Eagle's S-3, said the hospital's emergency response team was put on alert in case the suspected ordnance exploded and caused casualties.

"Everyone involved responded quickly to the scene," said Maj. Greg Powell, BDOC S-3. The EOD team arrived within 15 minutes of receiving the call from BDOC, and quickly determined that the possible UXO was only a grenade storage container, an oval canister used to ship the weapon. After a quick sweep of the perimeter to make sure it was safe, the EOD team departed, Maj. Powell said.

Staff Sgt. William Morrow, 3rd Military Police Company, Fort Stewart, Ga., said the MPs were dispatched to the area within minutes of the call from BDOC and set up a roadblock in front of Iron Horse Bluffs. "We cleared out everyone in the first three rows of SEAhuts to make sure that if the suspected grenade went off, no one would be injured," he said.

The grenade container was the second piece of suspected ordnance found near Iron Horse Bluffs in the last two weeks, said Maj. Powell. A 60 mm mortar round was found buried near the barracks section of Eagle Base.

"The same procedures taken for the grenade case were taken for the 60 mm round," he said. In both cases, the UXO were taken to the 1-121 headquarters. The ordnance is used in mine-awareness classes and as displays, said Maj. Powell.

"Even though the ordnance was nothing to be worried about, everyone present acted as they would with live rounds," he said.

Bosnia in Brief

Progress in Demining Operations

Multinational Division (North), working with the armed forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina to monitor, remove and destroy land mines and unexploded ordnance in the MND(N) area, is now into the eighth week of the summer demining program. As of May 19, the AF in BiH has cleared 66,092 square meters of land containing 55 antipersonnel mines, two antitank mines and 46 UXO.

The goal of the de-mining program, an Armed Forces in BiH-led effort throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, is to provide freedom of movement, facilitate displaced persons returning to their pre-war homes, and provide for a safe, secure environment for all citizens.

MND(N)'s role in the demining program is to consult with the Armed Forces in BiH on matters related to the de-mining process. MND(N) also provides selective monitoring teams to ensure standards are met while the actual de-mining is performed by the AF in BiH in the Federation and Republic of Srpska. MND(N) also provides mine-awareness classes to civilians and soldiers.

Compiled from Coalition Press Information Center releases

Soldier on the Street

"What did you think of the film, 'Pearl Harbor'?"

This is the type of war that I only read about, and could see on film. I am proud to be an American. This movie was great."

Sgt. Robert Joe
HHC, 1-121 IN(M)



This was a very interesting movie. It kept us in suspense like we were there."

Sgt. Leon Harrison
Co. C, 648th Eng.



It was a great movie, something I would definitely go see again."

Pfc. Melissa McConnell
223rd MP Co.



I liked the movie. It reminded me about how to be prepared for combat at all times. I also left with more respect for pilots."

Staff Sgt.
Lorenzo Harrell
Co. C, 648th Eng.

